

The education system of

# Algeria

described and compared with  
the Dutch system

This document contains information on the education system of Algeria. We explain the Dutch equivalent of the most common qualifications from Algeria for the purpose of admission to Dutch higher education.

### Disclaimer

We assemble the information for these descriptions of education systems with the greatest care. However, we cannot be held responsible for the consequences of errors or incomplete information in this document.

### Copyright

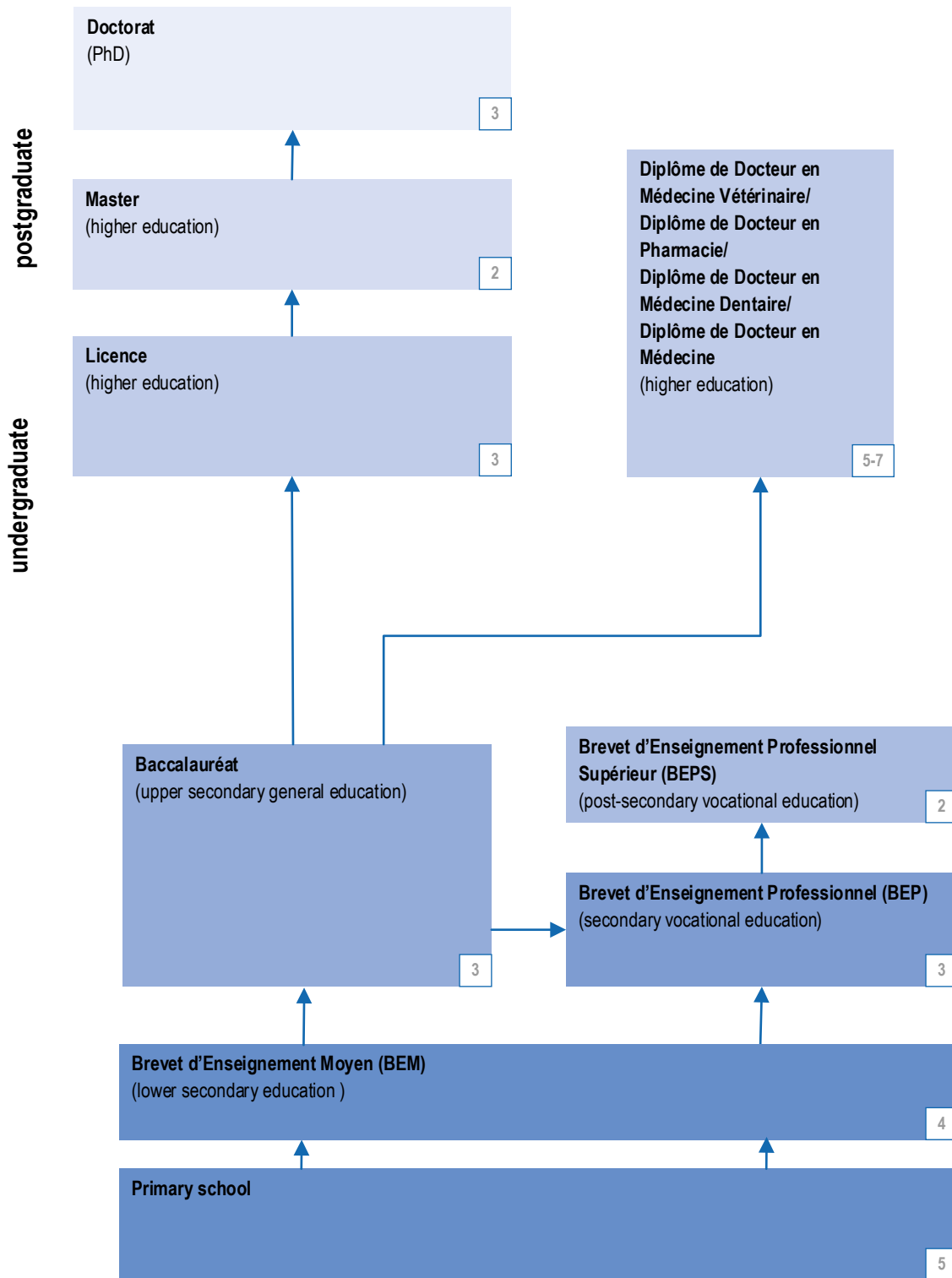


With the exception of images and illustrations, the content of this publication is subject to the Creative Commons Name NonCommercial 3.0 Unported licence. Visit [www.nuffic.nl/en/subjects/copyright](http://www.nuffic.nl/en/subjects/copyright) for more information on the reuse of this publication.

## ■ Background

- **Country:** Algeria (الجزائر), officially the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria (الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية). Algeria was a French colony from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century until 1962. As a result of this period, French remains an important language within the country, in addition to the official languages Arabic and Tamazight (Berber). Algeria was in a state of civil war between 1991 and 2002, tens of thousands of people were killed. The education system was under great pressure during this violent period, also called the black decade.
- **Responsible for education:** the Ministry of National Education, [Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale](#), is responsible for primary and secondary education; the Ministry of Professional Training and Employment, [Ministère de la Formation et de l'Enseignement Professionnel \(MFEP\)](#), for vocational education; and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, [Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique \(MESRS\)](#), for higher education. The education system is based on national legislation, see [Journal Officiel de la République Algérienne Démocratique et Populaire \(27 janvier 2008\)](#).
- **Bologna process:** Algeria has not signed the Bologna Declaration. However, the country did start implementing parts of the Bologna structure in 2004, such as the LMD system: *Licence-Master-Doctorat*, 3+2+3 years.
- **International treaties:** Algeria participates in the Erasmus+ programmes. The country also has its own scholarship scheme, the *Programme National Exceptionnel* (PNE) of the MESRS, aimed at Algerian students who wish to obtain a doctorate abroad. Agreements to promote knowledge exchange have been made as well with Mauritania, Italy and Romania.
- **Compulsory education:** ages 6-15.
- **Language of instruction:** Arabic in primary and secondary education, Arabic for non-technical higher education study programmes (such as law and literature), but French for medicine and technical programmes (such as science and IT).
- **School exams:** exams for the *Brevet d'Enseignement Moyen* (BEM) are in May; exams for the *Baccalauréat* are in June.
- **School year:** from September to early July.
- **Academic year:** from September to early July.

Flow chart: education system Algeria



0 Duration of education

## Evaluation chart

The left-hand column in the table below lists the most common foreign qualifications. The other columns show the Dutch equivalent along with the corresponding levels in the Dutch and European qualifications frameworks.

| Foreign qualifications                                      | Dutch equivalent and NLQF level  | EQF level | EQF level |
|---|--|-----------|-----------|
| <i>Brevet d'Enseignement Moyen (BEM)</i>                    | 3 years of <a href="#">HAVO</a>  | 2         | 2         |
| <i>Baccalauréat</i>   | at least a <a href="#">HAVO</a> diploma  | 4         | 4         |
| <i>Brevet d'Enseignement Professionnel (BEP)</i>            | <a href="#">MBO</a> diploma, qualification level 3 or 4                            | 3/4       | 3/4       |
| <i>Brevet d'Enseignement Professionnel Supérieur (BEPS)</i> | associate degree or 2 years of <a href="#">HBO</a>                                 | 5         | 5         |
| <i>Licence (3 years)</i>                                    | 2 years of <a href="#">WO</a> or 3 years of <a href="#">HBO</a>                    | 6         | 6         |
| <i>Master</i>   | <a href="#">HBO</a> master's degree or a 1-year <a href="#">WO</a> master's degree | 7         | 7         |

Note:

- The information provided in the table is a general recommendation from which no rights may be derived.
- [NLQF](#) = Dutch Qualifications Framework. [EQF](#) = European Qualifications Framework.
- The EQF or NLQF level is not so much a reflection of study load or content; rather, it is an indication of a person's knowledge and skills after having completed a certain programme of study.
- Information about Dutch equivalent qualifications can be found on our website: [education and diplomas the Netherlands](#).
- [The Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market \(SBB\)](#), evaluates statements on foreign qualifications and training at VMBO and MBO level. The evaluation may vary if SBB evaluates the diploma for admission to VET schools or the labour market in the Netherlands.

## Primary and secondary education

### Primary education

In Algeria, primary education lasts a total of 9 years (5+4):

- 5 years of primary school (*école primaire*, التعليم الابتدائي);
- 4 years of lower secondary education (*collège*, التعليم المتوسط).

Most pupils are taught in public schools. Pupils take English classes from the 1<sup>st</sup> grade of the *collège*. On average, pupils will be 11 years of age by this time.

To round off this 9-year period, pupils will take exams for the certificate called *Brevet d'Enseignement Moyen* (BEM)/شهادة التعليم المتوسط .

In terms of level, the *Brevet d'Enseignement Moyen* (BEM) is comparable to 3 years of senior general secondary education (HAVO).

Since 2003, the current structure of primary education (5 years of primary school + 4 years of *collège*) has been gradually implemented. The previous structure of 6+3 years prepared pupils for obtaining the *Brevet d'Enseignement Fondamental* (BEF).

### Secondary education

Pupils who pass the BEM exam may opt for:

- [general secondary education](#); or
- [secondary vocational education](#).

### General secondary education

Upper secondary education is called the *lycée* (التعليم الثانوي).

- [Duration](#): 3 years.
- Content: a general range of subjects, with the choice of a profile in the arts (*lettres*) or in science and technology (*sciences et technologie*). Also see [Range of subjects and specialisations](#). At the end, pupils take exams for the *Baccalauréat*.

➤ Diploma: *Baccalauréat de l'Enseignement Secondaire*/  
شهادة بكالوريا التعليم الثانوي

Note: The name of the diploma is often abbreviated to *Baccalauréat* or even *Bac*.

In terms of level, the *Baccalauréat* is comparable to at least a HAVO diploma.

**Range of subjects and specialisations**

In the 1<sup>st</sup> year of upper secondary education, pupils take a general range of subjects (*tronc commun*), while having to choose a profile in the arts (*lettres*) or in science and technology (*sciences et technologie*). They will continue their specialisation in their 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

The arts profile offers a choice of specialisations in:

- foreign languages (*langues étrangères*);
- arts and philosophy (*lettres et philosophie*).

The science and technology profile offers a choice of specialisations in:

- management and economics (*gestion et économie*);
- experimental sciences (*sciences expérimentales*);
- mathematics (*mathématiques*);
- technical mathematics (*mathématiques techniques*).

**Vocational education**

Following the BEM exam, pupils can opt for vocational education (*enseignement professionnel*) at different institutes and centres, in the following fields:

- agriculture and food industry (*agriculture et industrie agro-alimentaire*);
- construction and public works (*bâtiment et travaux publics*);
- mechanical and metallic construction (*construction mécanique et métallique*);
- electricity-electronics-energy (*électricité-électronique-énergétique*);
- hospitality, tourism and catering (*hôtellerie, tourisme et restauration*);
- computer and digital media (*informatique et médias-numériques*);
- mechanical vehicles and agricultural equipment (*mécanique matériel roulant et équipement agricole*).

The *enseignement professionnel* is comprised of 2 phases that pupils follow at an *Institut d'Enseignement Professionnel* (IEP). They can obtain a diploma for both phases. These new diplomas have been issued as from 2017:

- [Brevet d'Enseignement Professionnel \(BEP\)](#);
- [Brevet d'Enseignement Professionnel Supérieur \(BEPS\)](#).

Note: The names of diplomas used to be inconsistent before 2017 (for example, see the [Décret Présidentiel no 07'304](#)).

**Brevet d'Enseignement Professionnel (BEP)**

- Duration: 3 years.
- Type of education: secondary vocational education.
- Content: practical vocational education.
- Admission requirements: the *Brevet d'Enseignement Moyen* (BEM).
- Diploma: *Brevet d'Enseignement Professionnel* (BEP) / شهادة التعليم المهني.

In terms of level, the *Brevet d'Enseignement Professionnel* (BEP) is comparable to an MBO diploma at qualification level 3 or 4, depending on the specialisation.

Having obtained a *Brevet d'Enseignement Professionnel* (BEP) allows students to continue with the same specialisation, also at an *Institut d'Enseignement Professionnel* (IEP). If so, they are able to obtain the *Brevet d'Enseignement Professionnel Supérieur* (BEPS).

### ***Brevet d'Enseignement Professionnel Supérieur* (BEPS)**

- Duration: 2 years.
  - Type of education: post-secondary vocational education.
  - Content: mainly gaining practical experience in a particular field.
  - Admission requirements: the *Brevet d'Enseignement Professionnel* (BEP) or the *Diplôme d'Enseignement Professionnel du 2ème degré* (DEP2), the diploma that was issued before 2017.
- Diploma: *Brevet d'Enseignement Professionnel Supérieur* (BEPS)/  
شهادة التعليم المهني العالي.

In terms of level, the *Brevet d'Enseignement Professionnel Supérieur* (BEPS) is comparable to an associate degree or to 2 years of higher professional education (HBO).



## ■ Admission to higher education

The *Baccalauréat d'Enseignement Secondaire* grants access to higher education in Algeria. Prospective students need an average score of 10 or more on their *Baccalauréat* exams (see the section on [Assessment systems](#)). Many study programmes demand a higher average, however.

The [Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique \(MESRS\)](#) registers students in higher education. It administers an online platform on which students enter their preferences for placement in higher education. Subsequently, student placement is based on:

- the preferred study programme;
- the diploma and the results achieved;
- the number of available places at a higher education institution;
- the district in which the prospective student wishes to be enrolled.

## ■ Higher education

Algeria has a unitary system, in which higher education institutions offer both academic and professional study programmes.

### Types of institutions

The [Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research \(MESRS\)](#) currently has 106 registered public higher education institutions:

- 50 universities;
- 2 *annexes universitaires*;
- 13 *centres universitaires*;
- 20 *écoles nationales supérieures*;
- 10 *écoles supérieures*;
- 11 *écoles normales supérieures* (for teacher-training programmes).

In addition, the MESRS monitors private higher education institutions, which need to comply with stringent regulations. For example, they are not allowed to offer study programmes in medicine. Many private institutions offer a few programmes in a single field of study, such as business administration or certain technical specialisations. 11 recognised private higher education institutions are currently registered with the MESRS.

### Reforms

Higher education in Algeria underwent a major reform in 2004. While the [old system](#) (*système classique*) was derived from the French model, the new system consists of 3 cycles: *Licence – Master – Doctorat* (LMD).

This LMD structure, which is based on the [Bologna structure](#), has been implemented in phases. For a number of years, the 3-cycle structure existed side by side with the old system (*système classique*). In the meantime, the LMD structure has been implemented universally, except for study programmes resulting in the *Diplôme de Docteur* (+ specialisation). See also the section on [Exceptions](#).

## ■ University and higher professional education

Students in Algeria can pursue university and higher professional education at various [types of institutions](#).

The diplomas that students can obtain through the current structure are the following:

- *Licence*
- *Master*
- *Doctorat*

### **Licence**

The current *Licence* study programme takes a year less than in [the old system](#).

- [Duration](#): 3 years.
  - Content: theoretical or professional oriented education. The 1<sup>st</sup> year comprises general education, during which the students have joint classes (especially lectures), regardless of their individual specialisation. From the 2<sup>nd</sup> year onwards, the students gradually receive in-depth education for their field of study (the classes have been organised in different specialisations).
  - Admission requirements: apart from the *Baccalauréat* diploma, many study programmes have additional requirements for the profile and/or the average final mark.
- Diploma: *Licence*/الليسانس

In terms of level, a 3-year *Licence* is comparable to 2 years of university education (WO) or to 3 years of higher professional education (HBO), depending on the specialisation.

Note: The old *Licence* study programme used to take 4 years (i.e. 1 more year than currently).

### **Master**

- Duration: 2 years.
- Content: theoretical or professional oriented education, continuing from the *Licence* study programme. Students mostly attend lectures. They may do a

work placement in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year, depending on the specialisation. To finish their study programme, they frequently write a thesis.

- Admission requirements: a *Licence*. Many institutions have additional requirements, such as high marks for the *Licence* study programme.
- Diploma: *Master/ الماستر*

In terms of level, a *Master* is comparable to a master's degree in higher professional education (HBO) or a 1-year master's degree in university education (WO), depending on the specialisation.

### Doctorat

- Duration: 3 years.
- Content: scientific research and publication of at least 1 academic article, as well as writing and defending a dissertation.
- Admission requirements: a *Master*.
- Diploma: *Doctorat/ دكتوراه*

### Exceptions

Medical study programmes have not adopted the LMD structure. After 5, 6 or 7 years, students obtain the *Diplôme de Docteur* (+ specialisation).

The names of the diplomas are:

- *Diplôme de Docteur en Médecine Vétérinaire* (شهادة الدكتوراه في طب البيطري)
- *Diplôme de Docteur en Pharmacie* (شهادة الدكتوراه في الصيدلية)
- *Diplôme de Docteur en Médecine Dentaire* (شهادة الدكتوراه في طب الأسنان)
- *Diplôme de Docteur en Médecine* (شهادة الدكتوراه في طب البشري)

### The old system (prior to 2004)

From 2004, the LMD system has been implemented in phases. As a result, many institutions still issued diplomas according to the old system (*système classique*) after 2004.

Under the old system, students were able to obtain the following diplomas.

- 1<sup>st</sup> phase: 3-year *Diplôme d'Études Universitaires Appliquées* (DEUA), 4-year *Licence*, 4-year *Diplôme d'Études Supérieures* (DES), 5-year *Diplôme d'Ingenieur*.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> phase: *Diplôme de Magister* (duration: 2 years).
- 3<sup>rd</sup> phase: *Doctorat* (duration: 3 to 5 years).

## ■ Assessment systems

Results in secondary and higher education are scored on a scale of 0-20, where the minimum average mark to achieve a pass is 10. The final examination list in secondary education includes the weighting of subjects. Marks rarely exceed 18.

| Mark        | Description                | Definition         |
|-------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 18.00-20.00 | <i>excellent</i>           | excellent          |
| 16:00-17.99 | <i>très bien</i>           | very good          |
| 14.00-15.99 | <i>bien</i>                | good               |
| 12.00-13.99 | <i>assez bien</i>          | quite satisfactory |
| 10.00-11.99 | <i>passable</i>            | satisfactory       |
| 0-9.99      | <i>insuffisant/ajourné</i> | unsatisfactory     |

The *European Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (ECTS)* was implemented at the same time as the LMD structure. Not all higher education institutions in Algeria use ECTS, but the ones that mention credits do apply the European system (3 years = 180 ECTS).

For more information about the ECTS, consult the [ECTS Users' Guide](#) published by the European Commission.

## ■ Qualification frameworks

As it stands, Algeria does not have a qualification framework in which all study programmes are compared to the *European Qualification Framework (EQF)*, for example.

However, the *Journal Officiel de la République Algérienne* published a chart in 2007 called the *Grille des niveaux de qualification*. This chart classifies qualifications and diplomas into groups and categories, for which see the [Décret Présidentiel no 07'304](#).

The *Journal Officiel de la République Algérienne* also published a [text with a description of 5 levels](#) within vocational education in 2016. As a result, this text does not include the new diplomas of 2017.

## ■ Accreditation and quality assurance

The *Commission Nationale d'Habilitation* (CNH) is responsible for the accreditation of higher education institutions. Within the CNH, each ministerial department is represented by a delegate.

In addition, the [Commission d'Implémentation d'un système d'Assurance Qualité dans les établissements d'Enseignement Supérieur \(CIAQES\)](#) is responsible for quality assurance in higher education. CIAQES assesses the quality of higher education of institutions and study programmes. As from 2017, it has focused on supporting higher education institutions performing self-evaluations. There is also a range of committees conducting external evaluations.

## ■ Checking documents

### Secondary education

Schools in secondary education issue the *Baccalauréat* diploma along with a separate, official final examination list (both are in Arabic).

### Higher education

In higher education, institutions issue a diploma with separate transcripts for all academic years. By default, the diplomas and lists of marks are in Arabic. The lists of marks can also be in French only.

### Credential evaluation

Nuffic evaluates qualifications according to the principles of the [Lisbon Recognition Convention](#) (1997). A practical implementation of these standards can be found in the European [EAR manual](#).

## ■ Overview of institutions of higher education

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MESRS) provides overviews of recognised higher education institutions:

- [public universities](#)
- [centres universitaires](#)
- [écoles nationales supérieures](#)
- [écoles normales supérieures](#)

## Useful links

- [Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale](#), the Ministry of National Education, publishes, among other things, [the agenda](#) with the beginning of the school year and the school holidays.
- [Ministère de la Formation et de l'Enseignement Professionnel \(MFEP\)](#), the Ministry of Professional Training and Employment.
- [Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique \(MESRS\)](#), the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.
- [Office National des Examens et Concours \(ONEC\)](#) publishes the results for the BEM and the *Baccalauréat* (BAC).
- [Bureau National ERASMUS+ Algérie](#), the Erasmus+ programme in Algeria.
- [La Commission d'Implémentation d'un système d'Assurance Qualité dans les établissements d'Enseignement Supérieur \(CIAQES\)](#) offers information about the organisation of quality assurance in higher education.

## Glossary

- **BEM:** *Brevet d'Enseignement Moyen*. The certificate pupils can obtain after 5 years of primary school + 4 years of lower secondary education.
- **Bologna process:** The process that started after 29 European Ministers of Education signed the Bologna Declaration in 1999, with which they agreed, among other things, to create a European Area for Higher Education (EHEA): "An open space that allows students, graduates, and higher education staff to benefit from unhampered mobility and equitable access to high quality higher education". This includes setting up a system based on 2 cycles, undergraduate and graduate, also known as the bachelor-master structure. In 2003 a [third cycle](#) was added for doctoral programmes. The EHEA currently has [48 members](#).
- **Duration:** The official length of the full-time programme (not part-time) without study delay.
- **Graduate programme:** A higher education programme after completion of a bachelor's degree. See also the description in the Nuffic Glossary: [graduate](#).
- **Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC):** The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region, was drafted in 1997 by the Council of Europe and Unesco to facilitate and promote fair recognition among Parties of the Convention. Read more on the [website of the Council of Europe](#).
- **Undergraduate programme:** A programme for a bachelor's degree. See also the description in the Nuffic Glossary: [undergraduate](#).